

From: [Summers, Greg](#)
Subject: Academic Affairs Update, 04-24-20 (Fall Planning)
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Colleagues,

I know this has been a difficult week as UW-Stevens Point begins to grapple with the financial losses caused by COVID-19. That work will continue, and I'll write later today with a second update on where things stand. But as I mentioned last week, the surest way to minimize this impact is to do everything we can to preserve the continuity of our teaching and learning mission.

Toward that end, I write now to update you on our planning for next fall. Given the many uncertainties and variables outside our control, the task is complicated. Yet despite the challenges, our students and campus community need to understand how we will operate, and our decisions cannot wait for long. Within the university's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), we have created a workgroup to begin this planning. Dean Gretel Stock and I both serve as members from Academic Affairs.

Our planning will be defined by three principal scenarios: 1) an environment in which we are mostly open, though constrained by whatever health-related social distancing is still required; 2) the opposite extreme, in which we continue to operate almost entirely online; and 3) an intentionally hybrid posture in which we choose to operate at some level of distance—deliberately, to minimize risk—but we loosen our restrictions where appropriate to interact safely as conditions allow, especially in areas where greater engagement is essential to high-impact learning experiences.

My instinct, at least this morning, is to plan most aggressively for this third scenario, a path we might label a "low-residency" model of instruction. I suggest this because it seems most realistic given the circumstances, and because it would best position us to plan flexibly for both the worst-case and best-case scenarios, while charting a clear path for what is likely to be a far murkier reality between these extremes. Regardless, all three scenarios require vetting, input, and planning.

To facilitate this work, Dean Stock and I will organize several workgroups within Academic Affairs to inform the campus-wide EOC planning group: a small administrative team to outline the planning assumptions for each of the three scenarios outlined above; a curricular team to assist in identifying and developing strategies for the hybrid learning experiences we might need next fall; and finally, an operations team to consider policy implications, learning resources, and academic and technological support. (For additional help in developing our online teaching capacity, we will continue to rely on our colleagues in CITL and the team of skilled faculty members they have already assembled this semester.)

By Tuesday, April 28 please let me know if you might be interested in serving on one of these groups. The time required will be brief, since we hope to develop recommendations by the end of the spring contract period in late May.

There are no easy answers to the challenges ahead, and no one person can even know which questions to ask. Together, however, I'm confident we can define and solve these problems and ensure that our students continue learning no what matter challenges the year ahead might bring. I look forward to your help.

Thanks very much.

Greg

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